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HD **The NDP doesn't need a secret agent in its ranks**
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It's difficult enough for the B.C.

NDP to try and usurp a provincial government that has, through a morally corrupt fundraising system, so dramatically tilted the electoral playing field in its favour. It doesn't need a double agent in its midst to make that fight even harder.

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But today, the provincial New Democrats must confront that reality: There is someone on their team who doesn't want them to win the next election.

In fact, this person (or persons?) has covertly being aiding the enemy in the form of document leaks that have been going straight to the Premier's office for some time. If NDP Leader John Horgan doesn't think this is a problem that reflects unkindly on his leadership, he is kidding himself.

The latest act of sabotage took place this week. Before Mr. Horgan unveiled the climate-action plan on which he intends to campaign this spring, the contents of his announcement were released by the Liberals. The material that was sent to the governing party was extensive, and included the Opposition Leader's speaking notes, key talking points he expected his team to use and an outline of how the NDP intended to shape the climate debate during the election campaign.

Naturally, Premier Christy Clark's office was only too happy to take the information and use it to mock Mr. Horgan ahead of his news conference.

The disclosure of the NDP's messaging strategy isn't a fatal blow. The government would have surmised pretty quickly where the NDP was going with its plans for the environment, and where it, in turn, was vulnerable to attack. Still, the document leak did manage to steal some excitement away from Mr. Horgan and distract focus away from a climate plan that is more aggressive than Ms. Clark's.

It instantly received praise from credible climate scientists, something that cannot be said of the Liberals' much-ridiculed climate agenda. The NDP's plan would impose stricter emission levels, and see the provincial carbon tax increase sooner than it would under the Liberals.

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If the covert disclosure of insider information had been a one-off, then Mr. Horgan might not be worrying as much as he likely is this morning. But it was not.

There have been other leaks, more than the Opposition even knows. I'm talking about information that is leaving the NDP offices and ending up in the hands of senior officials in Ms. Clark's office.

Before this, it was Mr. Horgan's announcement ending the grizzly-bear trophy hunt – a draft of the announcement as well as the accompanying media strategy was gift-wrapped and delivered to Ms. Clark's team. That information was immediately turned over to members of the media, with the requisite Liberal spin on what the NDP was proposing and why it was bad policy. Notes from meetings of the NDP's provincial council have also been passed along.

Leaks have been a part of government life almost as long as governments have existed.

Some administrations are leakier than others, and the degree to which leaks happens is often a reflection of the leadership at the top.

While these internal betrayals are not fatal to Mr. Horgan, the fact that the NDP hasn't been able to identify the source represents a real dilemma. Now you have an environment where people inside the NDP caucus are looking over their shoulder, wondering who exactly can be trusted.

Naturally, there is a great deal of speculation about who the traitor might be. A disgruntled staffer? Or perhaps even an MLA who became an embittered, malcontent somewhere along the way? Who knows? Politics is a vicious sport, where acts of duplicity and treachery are not uncommon.

Understandably, there are many New Democrats in Victoria who are incensed about what has taken place. It is unnerving for them to think there is someone among them actively engaged in subterfuge to a nefarious end.

As I say, it's difficult enough trying to defeat a government that has stacked the deck so dramatically in its favour. The NDP doesn't need a spy working within its operations, passing along policy game plans to its opponents to make the task even more difficult.

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